



Office of the Mayor

200 Hobbs Street, West
Athens, AL 35611
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WILLIAM R. MARKS
Mayor

HOLLY HOLLMAN
Grant Coordinator/Communications Specialist

January 9, 2017

Alabama Department of Economic
& Community Affairs
Attn.: Mrs. Maureen Neighbors
P.O. Box 5690
Montgomery, AL 36103-5690

Re: City of Athens
FY2017-2018 Recreational Trails Program Pre- Application
Swan Creek Greenway Expansion and Trailhead Project

Dear Mrs. Neighbors:

On behalf of the City of Athens, I am pleased to submit the enclosed pre-application for funding consideration for the FY2017-2018 RTP grant competition. The expansion of the greenway and construction of the trailhead on the Southside of U.S. Highway 72 is important to the further development and enjoyment of the 2.3 miles of the Swan Creek Greenway.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this project. Should you need additional information please contact me or Holly Hollman at (256) 233-8730.

Sincerely,


William R. Marks
Mayor

FY2017-18 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

PRE-APPLICATION FORM

DEADLINE: NOON, FRIDAY, January 6, 2017

Applicant's Name (Organization): City of Athens

Address: 200 West Hobbs Street

Athens, AL 35611

256-233-8004

ZIP: 35611

County: Limestone

FEI Number: 63-6001188

Project Title (6 words max): Swan Creek Greenway Expansion and Trailhead Project

Project Description (25 words max):

Expansion of the Athens Swann Creek Greenway. Project will consist of expanding the greenway by 1,200 feet, acquiring land and constructing a trailhead to improve access to greenway along US Highway 72.

Park Name, if applicable: N/A

Park Address: N/A

N/A

ZIP: N/A

GPS Coordinates of Project: Coordinates: -86.947959 34.785241 decimal degrees

Congressional District: Congressman Mo Brooks, District 5

State Senate District: Senator William L. Holtzclaw, District 2

State House District: Representative Micky Hammon & Danny Crawford, District 4 & 5

Applicant Chief Elected Official or
Executive Director/President:

William R. Marks, Mayor

Phone and Email: (256) 233-8730 city@athensal.us

Grant Consultant or Other Contact
(if applicable):

Terry Acuff, Project Coordinator

Phone and Email: 256-890-4240; terryacuff@cci-hsv.com

Project Descriptive Narrative

Provide a brief, yet informative, description of the proposed project; address each evaluation criterion on the following pages (provide additional narrative and documents as may be needed to support your response to each evaluation criterion); and include a cost estimate, a preliminary site plan, plat and/or legal description, and location map.

Project Information

Name of Project: **Swan Creek Greenway Expansion and Trailhead Project**

Trail Length in Linear Feet (L.F.): **12,144** Trail Width: **12ft**

Trail Surface Type: **The majority of the trail is dense grade crushed rock, with some segments consisting of concrete, asphalt, and elevated boardwalk.**

Application Type: ☐ Non-motorized for a Single Use ☐ Motorized
☒ Non-motorized for Diverse Use ☐ Educational

Type of Applicant: ☒ City/Town ☐ County
☐ State ☐ Private Organization

Total Estimated Project Cost	\$ <u>250,000.00</u>
Grant Amount Requested	\$ <u>200,000.00</u>
Total Local Match	\$ <u>50,000.00</u>
Cash Match	\$ <u>50,000.00</u>
In-Kind Match	\$ <u>N/A</u>
Donation	\$ <u>N/A</u>

Brief Description of the Project:

The expansion of the Swan Creek Greenway will consist of expanding the greenway by 1,200 LF which will extend the trail beneath US Highway 72 and allow the City to acquire available property needed to construct a Trailhead just south of Highway 72. This trailhead will provide improved access to the trail from this heavily traveled highway.

Please address each evaluation criterion and insert your answers below each (120 Total Available Points).

- 1. Describe the degree to which the project's scope and feasibility meet the project area's recreational needs.**

The City of Athens is requesting funding assistance to expand the Swan Creek Greenway. The City of Athens located in Region 12 in Alabama Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan (SCORP). Region 12 is the second largest

region in the State by population with 13.3% of the state's population. Limestone County, in which Athens is the county seat, experienced the most growth (26% increase) in the region between 2000 and 2010. Within Region 12 the recreational activity in which the largest percentage of the population (59.5%) participates in is walking for pleasure. Walking and jogging trails ranked the 2nd most needed outdoor recreation facility, bicycle trails ranked the 4th most needed outdoor recreation facility, and hiking trails ranked the 6th most needed outdoor recreation facility in Region 12. Swan Creek Greenway is an existing 2.3 trail that provides an opportunity for residents in Region 12 to walk, jog, bicycle, and hike, all of which addresses 3 of the top 6 identified recreation needs in Region 12.

The Swan Creek Greenway Trail is owned and maintained by the City of Athens as an outdoor park and trail. The wooded trail parallels Swan Creek for approximately 2.3 miles, offering scenic views of small rapids and numerous pools along the tributary. The greenway either runs through lands owned by the City or in easements purchased by the city. A swath of mixed timberland is preserved along the creek and the trail. Many species of wildlife indigenous to northern Alabama, including deer, squirrel, chipmunk, and foxes, along with numerous types of fowl and fish, can be viewed and enjoyed by nature enthusiasts and casual pedestrians alike. Among the various types of fish in Swan Creek are the slackwater darter, a listed endangered species. A section of the greenway just south of the connection with Athens High School is a wild flower and outdoor classroom area for public and school use. Also, the greenway includes a 70-foot historical covered bridge which crosses Swan Creek. This project was moved from the Huntsville Hilton in 2004 to the Swan Creek Park Greenway in Athens and was partially funded with RTP funds in 2003. The trail connects with numerous recreational facilities at the City's Sportsplex, Athens High School Sports Fields and Swan Creek Park.

Therefore, the expansion of the Swan Creek Greenway and construction of a trailhead adjacent to heavily traveled US Highway 72 will enhance and significantly improve access to this heavily utilized multi-purpose trail which was designated a National Recreational Trail in 2012.

2. Describe the ways in which the project provides for the greatest number of compatible recreational purposes.

The Swan Creek Greenway is heavily utilized throughout the year. But one of the greatest impediments to the trail is limited access where the trail currently ends just on the Northside of US Highway 72. To improve access to the greenway the city needs to extend the Swan Creek Greenway 1,200 feet beneath an existing US Highway 72 bridge to obtain access to an available parcel of property with safe access to vehicular traffic on Highway 72 for the purpose of the constructing a trailhead on the Southside of the Highway 72. Currently, the trail connects with numerous recreational facilities at the City's Sportsplex, Athens High School and Swan Creek Park. The Sportsplex is a complex of facilities including baseball fields, soccer fields, a Frisbee golf course, a swimming pool and a playground. Swan Creek Park, located adjacent to the high school, offers a playground, tennis courts, and a pavilion with picnic tables, grills and public restrooms. An archery practice range and the pavilion is located along this section the greenway. The trail also connects with a loop trail that circles the high school and its athletic complex. A section of the greenway just south of the connection with Athens High School is a wild flower and outdoor classroom area for public and school use. With these recreational facilities, the Swan Creek Greenway Trail offers the public numerous opportunities to enjoy health benefits and family fun. However, the trail lacks a trailhead (access point) on the southern end of the trail which would improve connectivity to these parks from both ends of the greenway. By constructing this trailhead near U.S Highway 72 the city will be able to attract more visitors to trail from vehicular traffic along Highway 72 and nearby I-65.

3. Describe the ways in which the project provides a new, unique, or more effective means for making trail opportunities available to the public.

Swan Creek Greenway was designated a National Recreational Trail in 2012. The first phase of the Swan Creek Greenway was constructed in 2000. Since the completion of Phase 1 the City of Athens has continued to expand upon the trail

which now extends for 2.3 miles along Swan Creek and connects to several recreational facilities in the City of Athens. The expansion of the Swan Creek Greenway and proposed trailhead on the Southside of Highway 72 will increase and enhance the use of trail for the residents of Athens and the surrounding rural communities. By constructing this trailhead near U.S Highway 72 the city will be able to attract more visitors to trail from vehicular traffic along Highway 72 and nearby I-65. The City plans to increase awareness of the Swan Creek Greenway by installing signage along Highway 72 once a larger, easier accessible trailhead is constructed on the south side of Highway 72.

4. Describe the ways in which the project facilitates the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities, older citizens, economically disadvantaged, and other special populations or groups.

The Swan Creek Greenway was designed in accordance with the guidelines for accessible trails and in accordance with the standards put forth in the American's with Disabilities Act. Most the trail is dense grade crushed rock, with some segments consisting of concrete, asphalt, and elevated boardwalk. Per reviews by trail users the Swan Creek Greenway is consider walkable for citizens of all ages and disabilities. Since this greenway connects to many of the City's recreational facilities the expansion and construction of the trailhead will improve access to the trail for all citizens of Athens including persons with disabilities, older citizens, and economically disadvantaged. By creating more access points the trail becomes more accessible to residents regardless of physical condition or income.

5. Describe the ways in which the project creates opportunities for new partnerships between trail users, private interests, and public agencies within the project area.

The proposed trailhead located on the Southside of Highway 72 will provide access to Swan Creek Trail in one of the fastest growing commercial sections in Athens. There are over 10 restaurants, 3 hotels, and numerous retail outlets within walking distance of the proposed new trailhead. All the businesses in this area have expressed support of constructing a larger safer trailhead that will serve the Swan Creek Trail in this area. In fact, in 2013 Lowe's Home Improvement Store, which is

located just west of the trail on Highway 72, thru their Lowes Hero's Program volunteered to work with the City of Athens and the Athens Rotary Club to clear a small trailhead area on the north side of Highway 72 just below their store. This trailhead is utilized put due to limited access and minimal parking a larger safer trailhead is needed in this area. Upon approval of this grant application the City plans to work with the commercial business owners in the area and various trail user's groups to promote the Swan Creek Greenway.

6. Describe the ways in which the project uses the grant funds to leverage other public or private investments (in the form of services and materials as well as dollars).

The proposed expansion and construction of the trailhead along the Swan Creek Greenway will require a local match of \$50,000. In addition to the local match required to construct the proposed improvements to the greenway, the City of Athens has constructed much of the 2.3 miles of greenway with local funds. Maintenance and upkeep of the greenway is provided solely with funds from the City of Athens general fund.

7. Describe the degree of commitment to continue operation and maintenance of the project. Include an operation and maintenance plan detailing the amount of money needed to operate and maintain the trail after it is completed and identify who will be responsible for the work.

General maintenance of the Swan Creek Greenway is provided by the Parks and Recreation Department, while larger maintenance issues are occasionally dealt with by the City of Athens Public Works Department. The City of Athens Parks and Recreation Department have done an excellent job maintaining the trail since the first phase was constructed in 2000. This is evident by the excellent reviews the city receives from the trail user's websites concerning the condition and upkeep of the trail. The City of Athens will continue to budget funds annually in the Park and Recreation Department's budget to maintain the trail and the expansion and trailhead proposed in this application. In addition, trail user groups in Athens also have an excellent history of providing volunteer labor for trail maintenance and upkeep of the greenway.

8. The degree to which community involvement is addressed:

a. Project idea originated with trail users or a community group.

The need for the Swan Creek Greenway was identified as a priority in 1999 when a group of trail users contacted the City of Athens concerning the need for a multi-purpose trail along Swan Creek. Since the initial meeting between trail users and the City Council, the City of Athens has continued over the past 17 years to expand and construction additional access points from the greenway to other recreational facilities within the city. The input of trail users from the City of Athens and surrounding areas has been used in the development and design of each phase of the Swan Creek Greenway.

b. The private sector has participated in the development of the proposal idea and has made commitments of labor, money or materials to support the implementation.

The City of Athens will be providing the cash match required to implement this project. Local businesses along Highway 72 near the proposed trailhead site have voiced their support and resources toward this expansion and trailhead. As stated previously, Lowe's Home Improvement Store donated funds, time, and labor toward the construction of a small trailhead on the Northside of Highway 72. The local trail groups have committed to provide their time and labor to assist toward the construction of this expansion, if needed.

9. Describe in detail how the trail will be managed. Include discussion on season length, hours of operation, limitations on use, enforcement provisions, and scheduling.

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for managing the greenway which is opened 24 hours a day for the entire year. The City of Athens Police Department is responsible for the enforcement of the rules and safety of the trail.

The following rules will continue to be applied to the trail:

- 1) Use at own risk
- 2) No motorized vehicles of any type permitted on the trail.

10. Identify and describe the service area of the project. Approximately how many people do you propose to serve with this project? Identify other trail resources in the service area by trail type (motorized, non-motorized, multi-use), distance, location in relation to the proposed trail, and ownership.

The primary user group of the Swan Creek Greenway are residents from the City of Athens and surrounding areas. Based on the recreation needs identified in the SCORP for Region 12 and current usage rates of Swan Creek Greenway, local officials anticipate experiencing a significant increase in usage from trail users throughout this area once the new trailhead is constructed along heavily traveled Highway 72.

Per 2013 census data there are 24,000 residents in the City of Athens and 88,845 residents within Limestone County. Swan Creek Greenway is easily accessible to residents of both the City of Athens and Limestone County, not to mention the 346,892 residents which reside in Madison County which is located just to the west of the City of Athens.

11. Identify the length of time the trail will be maintained and open and available to the public and identify the method to be used to ensure this commitment (deed covenant, deed restriction, etc.).

The City of Athens Swan Creek Greenway is a permanent recreational facility that is wholly owned by the city. Because of the City's 2003 RTP project that expanded the Swan Creek Greenway, the deed for this property already references the Limitation of Use language, therefore the property is designated for recreational use for perpetuity.

12. The Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) and the High Efficiency Trail Assessment Process (HETAP) are methods of obtaining and recording objective data related to outdoor, natural environments. They are tools that land managers, agencies, and individuals can utilize to learn about, monitor, improve, and encourage the safe and enjoyable use of any outdoor path of travel. Points are available to project sponsors committing to the assessment of the trail and installation of Trail Access Information signage.

As stated previously the Swan Creek Greenway is maintained and operated by the City of Athens Park and Recreation Department. At the present time, the City of

Athens is researching the benefits of the Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) and the High Efficiency Trail Assessment Process (HETAP) but are not ready to commit to UTAP or HETAP assessment at this time.

Total Project Cost: \$250,000.00

Funds Requested: \$200,000.00

Important Note: The maximum grant amount by trail type is **\$70,000.00** for non-motorized, single-use trails; **\$200,000.00** for non-motorized, diverse-use trails; **\$500,000.00** for motorized trails, or **\$87,489.00** for education projects.


William R. Marks

Mayor
(Title)


(Date)

Detailed Project Cost Estimate

**SWAN CREEK GREENWAY EXTENSION
PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE**

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
Multi-purpose Track	1000	LIN FT	\$15.00	\$15,000.00
Multi-purpose Track (Concrete)	200	LIN FT	\$35.00	\$7,000.00
Gravel Parking Lot	1925	SQ YD	\$10.00	\$19,250.00
Grading	1	LS	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
Roadway Extension	175	LIN FT	\$150.00	\$26,250.00
Lighting	1	LS	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Property Acquisition	1	ACRE	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
Drainage Work	1	LS	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
Mobilization	1	LS	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Engineering	1	LS	\$12,500.00	\$12,500.00
Grant Fees	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00

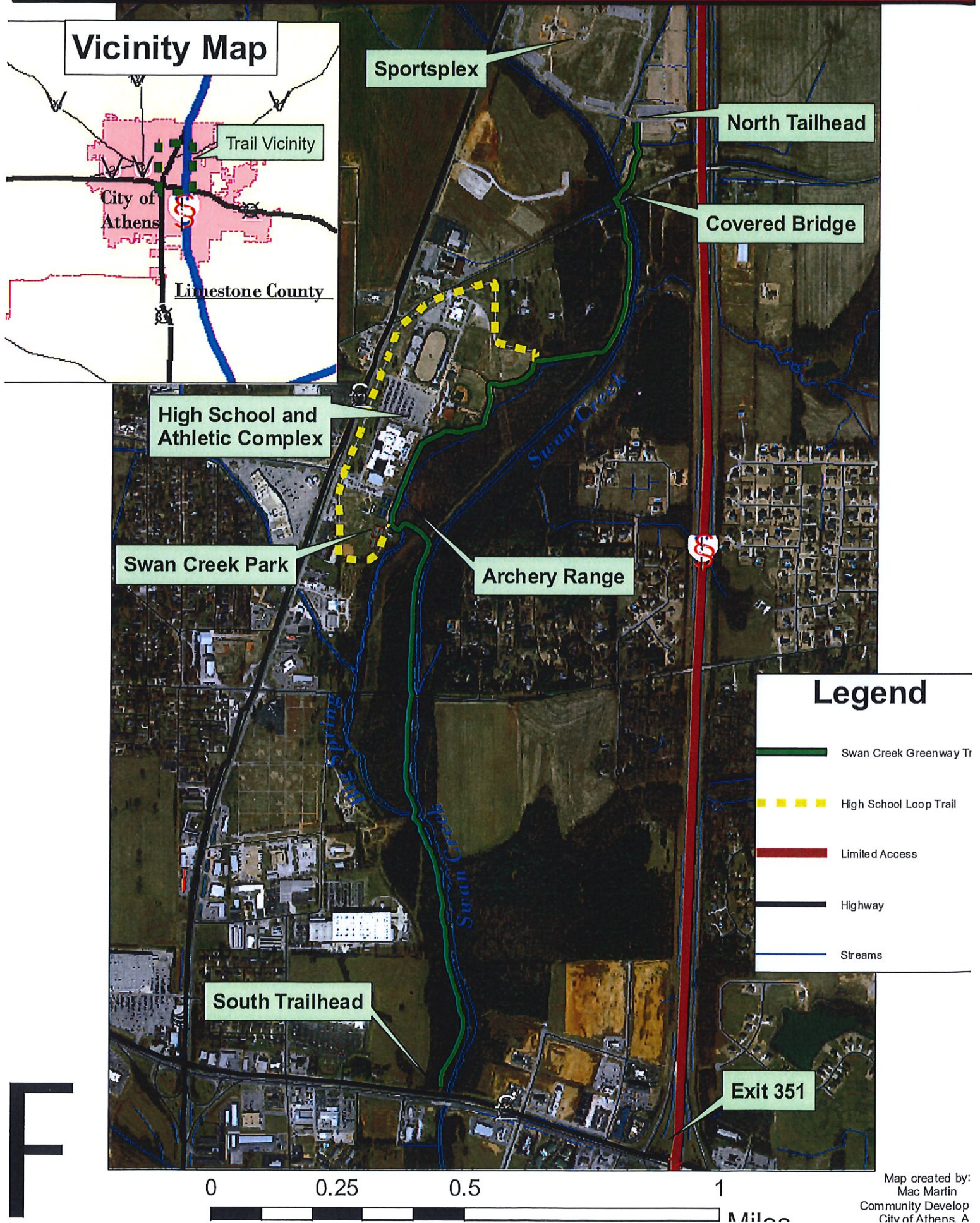
TOTAL \$250,000.00

Proposed Improvements Map
(Trail Expansion and Trailhead Site)

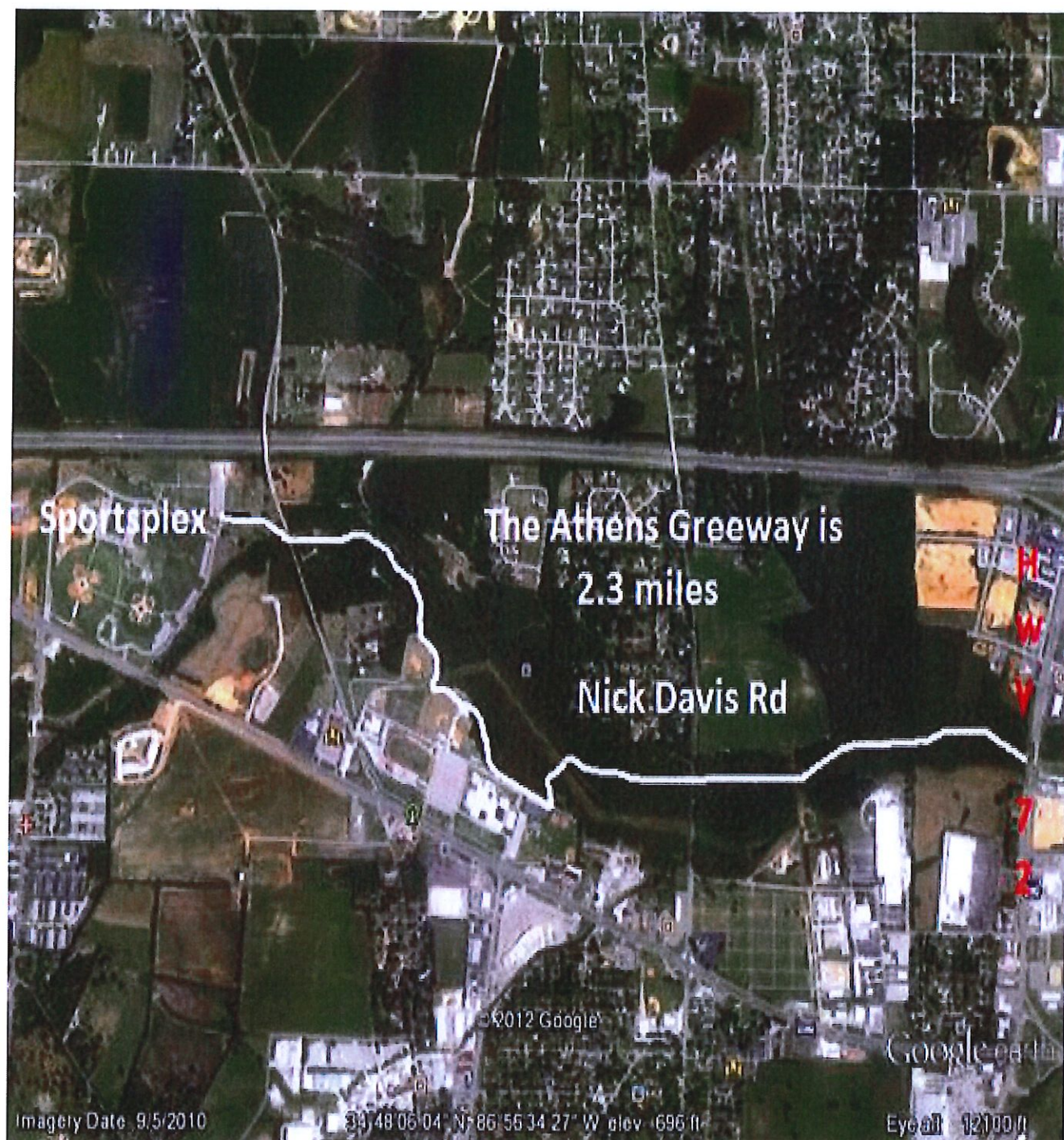


Swan Creek Location Map

Swan Creek Greenway



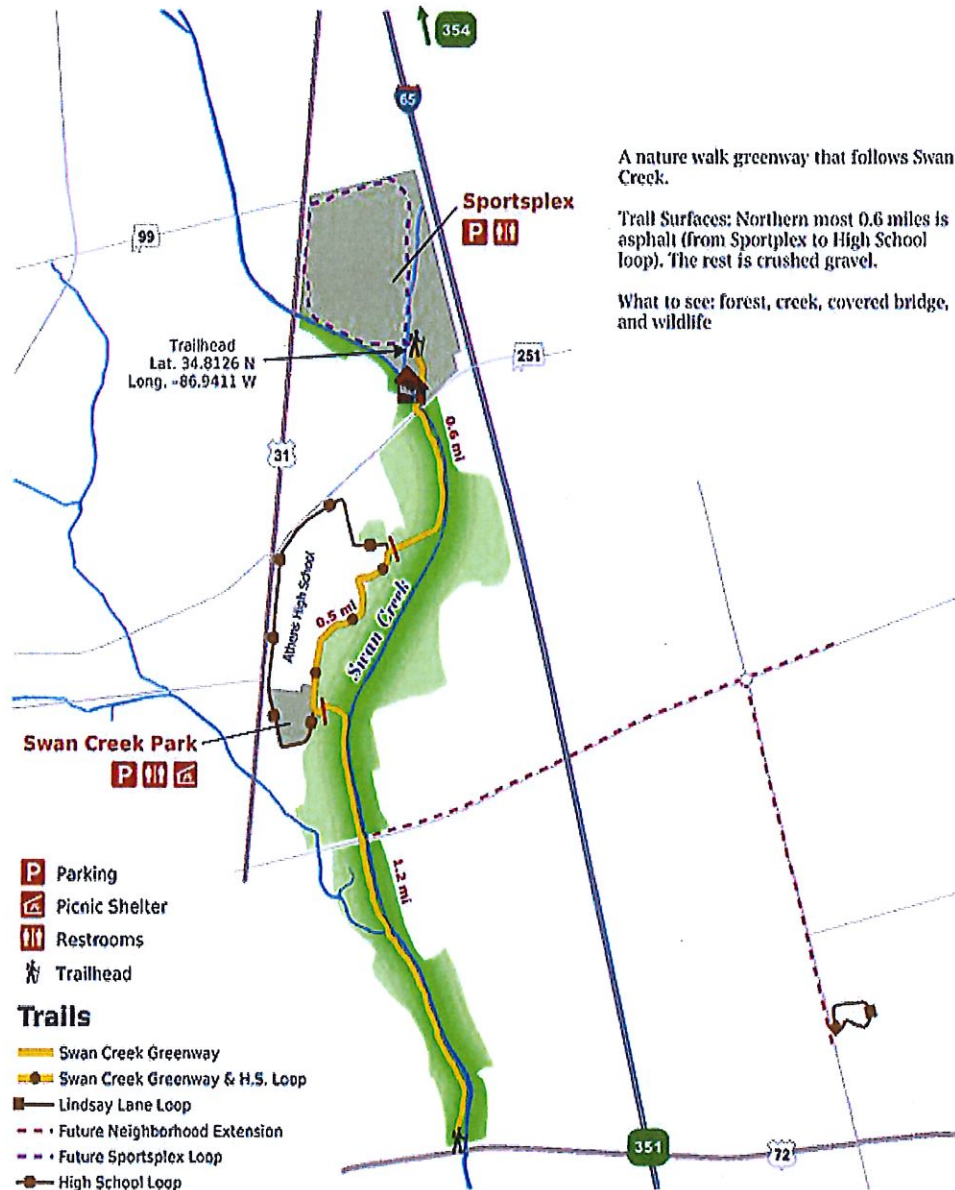
Map of Swan Creek Greenway



SWAN CREEK GREENWAY BOUNDARY MAP

Swan Creek Greenway

2.3 mile greenway



A nature walk greenway that follows Swan Creek.

Trail Surfaces: Northern most 0.6 miles is asphalt (from Sportsplex to High School loop). The rest is crushed gravel.

What to see: forest, creek, covered bridge, and wildlife

Photos of Swan Creek Greenway



PHOTOS OF SECTIONS OF SWAN CREEK GREENWAY



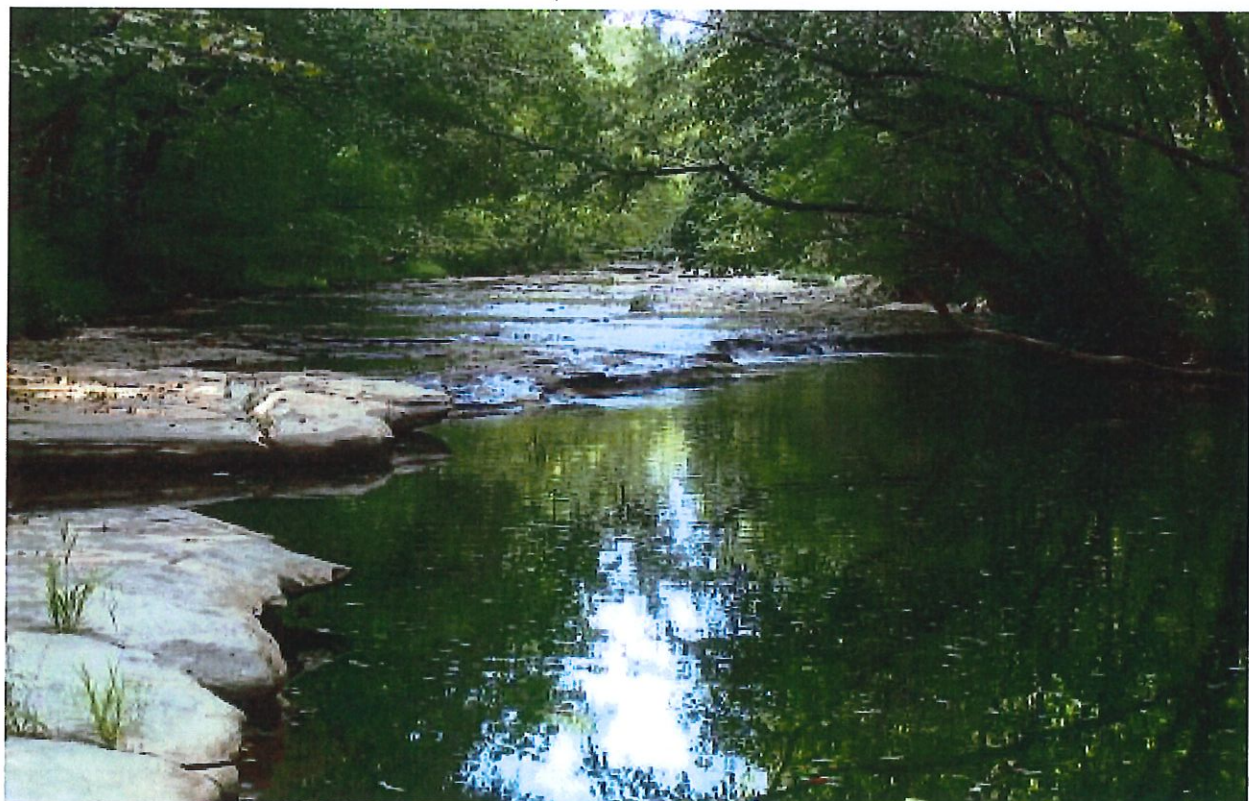


PHOTOS OF SECTIONS OF SWAN CREEK GREENWAY





**PHOTOS OF SECTIONS OF SWAN CREEK GREENWAY AND PHOTO
BELOW IS OF SWAN CREEK FROM THE TRAIL**



City of Athens Resolution
(will be adopted January 23, 2017)

CITY OF ATHENS

RESOLUTION # _____

WHEREAS, the City of Athens has made it known their intention to apply to the State of Alabama for Recreational Trails Program Funds to extend and construct a trailhead on the Swan Creek Greenway, and

WHEREAS, said programs are limited to funding a maximum of eighty percent (80%) of the proposed project cost which will be used to construct improvements to the trail.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the City of Athens will commit \$50,000 of the proposed \$250,000 project cost for matching the Recreational Trails Fund Project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the event the grant is awarded, the City of Athens understands that it will sign assurances complying with all applicable Federal and State laws, rules and regulations.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Athens City Council, on this the 23rd day of January 2017.

Signed for the City of Athens:

William R. Marks, Mayor

Attest:

Annette Barnes, City Clerk

SAM.Gov Registration Verification

SAM Search Results
List of records matching your search for :

Record Status: Active

DUNS Number: 077656221

Functional Area: Entity Management, Performance Information

ENTITY ATHENS, CITY OF

Status:Active

DUNS: 077656221

+4:

CAGE Code: 5U7K3

DoDAAC:

Expiration Date: Nov 8, 2017

Has Active Exclusion?: No

Delinquent Federal Debt?: No

Address: 200 W HOBBS ST

City: ATHENS

ZIP Code: 35611-2108

State/Province: ALABAMA

Country: UNITED STATES